/98 cont./

755 beat quite hard upon the basket with their sticks, in order to
•[535] give the sickness the finishing blow. All the movements were executed in a dance rhythm, two steps forward and one back, during which the "hekurá" uninterruptedly sang the words ho-he-hi-ha-ſk, ho-he-hi-ha-ſk, while "nonexſ" uttered shrill sounds in between. At first the "battle" was enacted at some distance from the sick woman, but during the "argument" they drew nearer to her. "Nonexſ" now danced alone at the head end of Xunamſ, and the two "hekurá" stroked the body of the sick woman and sucked at it. Then they vomited, and one of them suddenly took a stone out of his mouth, and the other, a piece of wood. With shrill cries they threw these objects away, while "nonexſ," who was still at the head end of the patient, crouched down and started to whimper loudly. With the stone and the piece of wood the sickness was to be hurled back to the Waiká. Then the sham battle between "nonexſ" and the "hekurá" began anew, frequently interrupted by the sucking and stroking of the body of the sick woman, who suffered everything indifferently. Meanwhile the men kept blowing snuff-powder into each other's noses. For four hours the treatment went on, but there was no improvement to be seen in Xunamſ; rather, she grew worse. The sick woman was then set on the ground in front of her hammock, and two other men, this time only personified hekurá, continued the treatment in snuff-powder intoxication, in that they danced around the woman, sang, and screamed loudly. In between, they stroked Xunamſ's body and sucked out little stones, which they spat upon, licked, and then rubbed against their own bodies before they hurled them away with shrill cries. Now and then they also struck out with hands and feet and threatened an invisible foe. Occasionally they spat and stepped on the sputum with gestures of repugnance. Then the patient was again placed in her hammock and doused with cold water.

As a result of the high fever and long fasting, Xunamſ was already very weak. But during the coming night a very great rekurá (magic cure; see also p. 211) was to be performed, and, to be sure, by Chief Hewemãõ and eight helpers. (The chief

/100 cont./

755 cries in the most diverse tones, they rushed toward the sick woman. They were like a wild horde, for the participants screamed at the top of their voices, bent their knees, leaped into the air, and shook their fists at an invisible foe. After a renewed hissing sound by Hewemãõ, they formed a circle around the sick woman lying in her hammock, and each man placed both hands on the shoulders of the one standing in front of him. With swaying dance steps, two forward and one back, during which they sang ho-he-hi-ha-fk, ho-he-hi-ha-fk, they walked around the patient for some time. Then Hewemãõ hissed for the third time, whereupon the song ceased. Then the chief struck up a melodious song which his helpers underscored with humming. Meanwhile, with swaying step, they continued to move around the sick woman, their hands always on the shoulders of the man in front as before. After 15 minutes Hewemãõ hissed again, and then they laid their hands crossed upon the shoulders of the one walking ahead. At the same time all the men joined in the song /101/ of the chief, and again they sang in parts. This choral singing, together with the dancing in step, lasted another 20 minutes. Then the chief and his brother Kurikayawõ placed themselves opposite each other at the head end of the patient and struck up an alternate song. At the foot end squatted two helpers who also faced each other and hummed softly. A short distance behind the head end two more helpers danced back and forth with faces turned toward each other; they were also humming, and occasionally they uttered bird-like sounds; they frequently ran their fingers through their hair and then always passed them downward over their seats. 755 Meanwhile the other three men, two painted red, the one black-colored, that is to say, two "hekurã" and "nonexi," were carrying on a sham battle beyond the foot end of Xanimã, in a manner similar to that already described on page 216. In the meantime the daughter-in-law of the sick woman had raised her up and had seated herself behind her in the hammock, at the same time supporting the old woman with both arms. Then when the sham combat was ended, and the bad "nonexi" lay on the

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769 25 [462] few days. This roasting belongs to the men's sphere of duties, as does the harvesting of pupunha fruits. The latter are then made into a drink by the women. Moreover, they fetched from the plantings large quantities of bananas which were put in the sun so that they could ripen, and, finally, it should be mentioned that among all the families several stacks of manioc flat-cakes were piled up little by little.

769 535 [296] On the evening of April fourth, toward 9:00, the actual festival began. Five men and five boys, who wore cotton belts over their hip cords, danced, after the former had first blown snuff-powder into each other's noses, one behind the other (two steps forward and one back, during which the more marked lifting of the knees with a slight turning outward of the legs is to be noted), on a circular path in the open circle of the maloka, and, to be sure, counterclockwise (509a). The first two men

509a. In all the dances that go around the periphery of a circle the participants dance counterclockwise.

each held two arrows in the right hand, and the rest, as well as [533] all the boys, had their hands crossed behind their heads. Occasionally one man would sing in a beautiful, full bass voice, and the others would then join in chorus. The songs were very melodious and furnished the rhythm for the dance steps (509b).

[534] 509b. The Surára and Pakidái accompany dances in part with songs, for musical instruments are unknown to them.

[296] Toward 10:00 more men, in part with arrows, in part without, and boys (all without arrows) joined the dancers, and at 11:30 all the men and boys, with the exception of the Surára chief, were gathered in the center of the maloka courtyard, where, from a large clay plate filled with snuff-powder that had been placed here along with several snuff tubes, they blew huge quantities into each other's noses. Then they sat down in a

Surára
Pakidái

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[533]

/103 cont./Then they sat down in a circle and started singing a song in chorus. Soon afterwards five warriors, holding arrows in both hands, arose and danced around the singers. Now and then they made huge leaps and shouted in a high, shrill voice. All this was enacted on a cool, cloudy, full-moon night, but the numerous hearths added some light. All the women and girls, as well as my servant Mateus and I, lay in the hammocks and watched the unique spectacle. Toward 1:00 in the morning the male participants in the festival arose and now danced, again one behind the other, around the outer circle of the maloka courtyard. They were arranged in such a way that a man with two arrows was always followed by one who held his hands crossed behind his head.

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Suddenly Chief Hewemão, who was sleeping in his hammock next to me, was tapped lightly by a warrior with an arrow. He got up at once, removed shirt and trousers (he had been given the two articles of clothing by me as gifts), took a bow without a bowstring in his hand, had snuff-powder blown into his nose, and mixed with the dancers, who, however, immediately after his entrance formed the following new formation: Ten men arranged themselves in rhombus form at the head of the dance procession, one at the very front, two behind to one side, and two more behind and to one side of these; two stood directly opposite the latter, then followed two who stood somewhat inward and finally one who was in the middle behind these (Fig. 29). The first five warriors, who had blackened themselves with soot, symbolized the nonexí (evil spirits or spirits of sickness, see p. 211) and were obliged to dance backwards. The five dancers following them embodied hekurá (gigantic animal and plant spirits who /104/ /Fig. 29 appears here/ Pakidái; see pp. 199, 214 ff.). Between these two groups of five, the participants of which each held two arrows in their hands, a sham battle was being carried out during the dance (see also pp. 214 ff.). Each of the men of the first group danced two steps back and one forward, and those of the second, two steps forward and one back. In between, wild leaps and turns were executed, the men threatened each other with the arrows and screamed in the highest key. The "nonexí" were constantly in

Surára
Pakidái

/104 cont./

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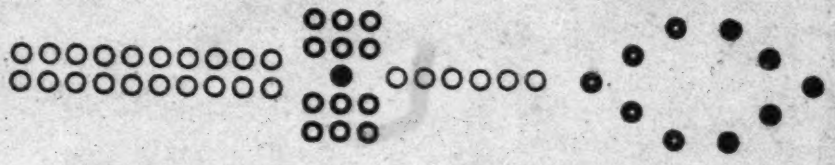

Advance and rear guard | Dignitaries | Surára chief | hekurá | nonexí

Fig. 29. Arrangement of the dancers on the occasion of a ceremony of the festival in memory of the dead.

retreat and defended themselves with all their might against the advancing "hekurá." Behind these ten "fighting" dancers there followed six men in a row, each with an arrow in his hand, the advance guard of the chief. At a slight distance they were joined by the Surára [622] chief Hewemãõ, flanked on either side by six men forming a double row. These men were also prominent personalities; thus, among them there were the two younger brothers of the chief, the war chief of the Surára, the chief and war chief of the Pakidái, as well as especially excellent older warriors of both tribes. Following them, as a rear guard, in a double-row formation, came the rest of the men, young men, and boys. All who took part in the procession moved in the customary dance steps, two forward and one back, during which they sang in chorus. Now and then Chief Hewemãõ would utter a hissing sound, whereupon all the participants grouped themselves in the center of the plaza around the large clay plate with snuff-powder. Here the chief, in a singing voice, prayed to the hekurá [622] and asked them to intercede with Poré/Perimbó, so that the festival [782] would be vouchsafed a happy and successful course. Then the men [276] blew new snuff-powder into each other's noses, whereupon the dance would continue in the manner described above. This dancing and singing lasted, except for the brief interruptions at the clay plate, until 6:00 in the morning.

Surára
Pakidái

/105 cont./

769 in the ear lobes were adorned with colorful feather ornaments
[302] (see pp. 93/95). Moreover, they had all glued into their hair
[301] the white down feathers of the gavião-real (Thrasaetus harpyia L.),
the dreaded carrier of sickness (see p. 211) (Ill. 43). They
769 made mighty leaps, then bent their knees, turned around
535 several times in between, threw their arrows into the air and
533 caught them again. After that they fell into a dance in step,
during which they sang. But this dance was constantly interrupted by wild charges and rousing shouts, which were supposed to drive the nonexí out of the maloka and show them how dangerous it was to come here at all. The others present were enthusiastically watching this performance from their hearths. For the
[302] occasion of the festival all the men, women, and children had
[292] likewise painted themselves and in part donned the cotton belts;
[301] moreover, the men wore their upper-arm ornaments of feathers (Ills. 9-11).

769 After this two-hour dance performance a particularly solemn ceremony took place, the blessing of the preserved bone ashes of deceased tribesmen. For this purpose two leading personalities of each of the two tribes sat down in a square formation before the chief's hut. The Surára chief Hewemão was squatting in such a way that he faced the maloka courtyard. To the right and left of him, somewhat to the side and forward, squatted the Pakidái chief, Karenauõ, and Hewemão's brother, Kurikayawõ, respectively, and opposite Hewemão, Porêhiwõ, the war chief of the Pakidái, had his place. In front of the latter were arranged ten small jamaru vessels (jamaru = Cucurbita idolatrica Lacerda) filled with bone ashes. Behind them stood one empty gourd bowl and one filled with urucú. The Pakidái chief, Karenauõ, on the other hand, had two large empty jamaru vessels standing in front of him.

Porêhiwõ now poured bone ashes from one after another of the small jamaru vessels into the empty gourd bowls, added a little urucú, mixed the two with his hands, and gave the bowl to Karenauõ, who each time poured the contents into one of the
[782] larger jamaru vessels. While the two Pakidái were silently per-
[788] forming their work, Hewemão was praying in a half-singing

Surára
Pakidái

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296 snuff-tubes. After these preparations, the chiefs, all the men, youths, and boys, light and black-colored participants, assembled outside the maloka. At a hissing sound from Hewemão they then stormed into the courtyard, screaming loudly, ran once around the periphery, and then grouped themselves around the clay plate. The snuff-tubes were filled with powder, and the men by twos blew it with all their might into each other's noses (Ill. 44). On the occasion of this festival they take even more snuff than before other magic performances, curing the sick, and prayers. The effect was extraordinary. After only a few moments all the men were in a wild state of ecstasy (Ills. 45 and 46). At first they danced and leaped, gesticulating and screaming, in wild disorder around the clay plate, and after that they stormed around the courtyard several times in the
● [535] same manner. Then groups of five, ten, or more men put their arms around each other's necks and performed stamping circle-dances in this formation (Ill. 47), during which each man tried to pull another one tightly to him; now and then they also
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526 danced with the knees bent. After half an hour, this ecstatic dancing, during which the participants were bathed in sweat, was replaced by an extremely strange type of sport -- petapóanhamũ. In the entire outer circle of the maloka courtyard there were seated everywhere two men opposite each other, chest to chest, with legs spread apart; in each case one had his on top of the thighs of the other one. The partners were always a Surára and a Pakidái; moreover, in each case one of them was blackened. They wound their arms around each other at the neck and, with vigorous arm movements, pulled each other back and forth with all their might (Ill. 48). Each tried to pull the head of his opponent quite close to him. Sometimes their arms would drop down on the back of the other one, and they would then pull at each other for a while in this position. During the struggle they constantly called out wrathful words at each other. Often the wives stood beside their husbands and spurred them on. But there were no victors and no losers in these combats. If the strength of a combatant flagged, another tribesman immediately came and continued the struggle with the opponent

2: Becher--278 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

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Surára
Pakidái

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Ill. 41. Pakidái Indian with tobacco roll between lower lip and teeth.

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Ill. 42. The Surára and Pakidái men assemble during the festival in memory of the dead for the ceremonial drinking of the banana soup which is mixed with bone ashes of deceased members of the tribe.

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Ill. 43. A dance of the Surára warriors. (Chief Hewemão is sitting at the left in the foreground.)

2: Becher--280 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Surara
Pakidái

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Ill. 46. Height of ecstasy

Ill. 47. Circle dance in the state of ecstasy

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Ill. 48. Petapoanhamú -- the embracing-combat performed in a sitting position

/470 cont./

512 men. Some of them sing in singsong voices to influence the [276] spirits, while others wander around like drunks. A few do not take any "yopo" at all. These "yopo" cantilenas generally last for about two hours.

In the afternoon a few more women, including some of those who were in the conuco in the morning, go out to look for /471/ firewood. Other women devote themselves to spinning cotton. At about 5:00 in the afternoon the women and girls go down to the stream to fill all the gourds or totumas.

[824] A little before dark, the evening meal ends. Palm leaves [721] are placed so as to obstruct the entrances to the paths against [776] the coming of wandering spirits and also to make greater difficulty for any attacking band coming from an enemy settlement. Every house lights its own fire and prepares for the night. At about 7:00 P.M. all is silent.

● [535] But if the moon comes out, the women and children may [533] continue singing and dancing until well into the night. Or when [203] there are visitors who arrived during the day, there might be [594] crooning of news throughout the night, until the coming of the sun puts an end to it.

Names

553 Every individual receives a name given by his parents. Un-
551 til the child receives a name, he is called by any of the standard names that are applied to small children. The use of these standard names is usually prolonged for several years after the boy or girl has received his own name. It is taboo to give one person the name of another. There are no homonyms or namesakes. An individual might be given the name of a plant, an animal, an action, an aspect, or sometimes simply be given some name invented by his parents.

551 Nicknames are given freely. Some have a root, others do not. Usually they are very descriptive and frequently very biting.

It is not good manners to call a person by his name, if it can be avoided. It is always better to say: the older brother of so-and-so, the older sister of so-and-so, the husband of so-and-so, the father of so-and-so, or the mother of so-and-so.

/483 cont./

758 They bathe sick persons. If the patient cannot go to the
515 stream, they bathe him part by part at home and even in his own hammock.

/484/ Death

763 They are generally afraid of death and make every effort to keep a dying person alive for a while longer. When someone is in danger of dying, the relatives and friends hold meetings for lamentations at least once a day.

764 When a dying person expires, a time of mourning begins.
[302] Then, at about 3:00 in the afternoon, the funeral begins. The relatives and friends begin to paint themselves. There is much
• [535] crying and lamentation. The women dance forward and backward, groaning and carrying several poisoned darts in one hand. If there are young children, they are frequently carried also. If the deceased is a little one, its little body may be carried during the final part of this mourning dance. A few closely related men and the intimate friends also participate in the dance.

After the lamentations have continued for a quarter of an hour more or less, the men go out in search of firewood and light a fire of two meters in front of the dwelling where the corpse is lying. When the fire reaches an adequate size, the body is carried there in a hammock made of cords of vine and placed on the fire. Then they put more wood on top of the
[766] corpse. If the deceased is an infant, they place it in the fire in a flat basket rather than a hammock. They keep the fire burn-
[765] ing until around ten at night. Then they gather up the bones, wrap them in leaves, and hang them in the house.

If someone should die far from the settlement, his body is wrapped in leaves tied with vines and carried to the settlement to be cremated.

765 About three days after the cremation, the bones are pulverized in a small trough and then kept hermetically in a gourd capped with beeswax. The trough is made by using a machete to carve out the hole, burning its interior. They use it only once. After it is used, both the trough and the pestle are burned. Much weeping accompanies the process of pulverization and sealing the remains in the gourd.

11: Chagnon B-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanomama SQ18

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The fact that the Yąnomamö live in a state of chronic warfare is reflected in their mythology, values, settlement pattern, political behavior, and marriage practices. Accordingly, I have organized this case study in such a way that students can appreciate the effects of warfare on Yąnomamö culture in general and on their social organization and politics in particular (Fig. 1-1).

I collected the data under somewhat trying circumstances, some of which I will describe in order to give the student a rough idea of what is generally meant when anthropologists speak of "culture shock" and "fieldwork." It should be borne in mind, however, that each field situation is in many respects unique, so that the problems I encountered do not necessarily exhaust the range of possible problems other anthropologists have confronted in other areas. There are a few problems, however, that seem to be nearly universal among anthropological fieldworkers, particularly those having to do with eating, bathing, sleeping, lack of privacy and loneliness, or discovering that primitive man is not always as noble as you originally thought.

This is not to state that primitive man everywhere is unpleasant. By way of contrast, I have also done limited fieldwork among the Yąnomamö's northern neighbors, the Carib-speaking Makiritare Indians. This group was very pleasant and charming, all

Fig. 1-2. One way that warfare affects other aspects of Yąnomamö social organization is in the great significance of intervillage alliances. Here members of an allied village dance excitedly in their hosts' village in anticipation of the feast and chest-pounding duel that will follow.

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11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

which more stable types of alliance can develop. Nor do they overtly acknowledge the relationships between trading and feasting cycles to village interdependency. In this regard they are like the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia: They have a "functional ignorance" of the more significant adaptive aspects of their trading institutions. To both the Yąnomamö and the Trobrianders, the mechanisms by which peoples from different groups are compelled to visit each other are ends in themselves and are not conceived to be related to the establishment of either economic or political interdependency. For the Yąnomamö participant in a feast, the feast itself has its significance in the marvelous quantities of food, the excitement of the dance, and the satisfaction of having others admire and covet the fine decorations he wears. The enchantment of the dance issues from the dancer's awareness that, for a brief moment, he is a glorious peacock that commands the admiration of his fellows, and it is his responsibility and desire to present a spectacular display of his dance steps and gawdy accouterments. In this brief, ego-building moment, each man has an opportunity to display himself, spinning and prancing about the village periphery, chest puffed out, while all watch, admire, and cheer wildly.

The hosts, too, have an opportunity to display themselves and strut before their guests. Moreover, the very fact that they have given the feast is in itself a display of affluence and surfeit apparently calculated to challenge the guests to reciprocate with an equally grandiose feast at a later date.[1] Each good feast deserves and calls forth another, and in this way allies become better acquainted with each other as they reciprocate feasts during the dry season and over the years.

Historical Background to a Particular Feast

One of the feasts I witnessed exhibited all the features of intervillage politics. Before describing this feast, I will give the historical antecedents to the event, recapitulating a number of points discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of the history of Kąobawä's village. The significance of the events will then become clear, for Kąobawä's prior relationships to the guests at the feast had a great deal to do with the outcome.

In 1950 Kąobawä's group, almost friendless, beleaguered by enemies, and somewhat isolated, began cultivating an alliance with the Iwahikoroba-teri (see map, Fig. 2-8), a Shamatari village, some two days' traveling distance southeast of their own village at Kreiböwei. The Iwahikoroba-teri were on friendly terms with another Shamatari group, the Möwaraoba-teri, from whom they had separated some years before. Kąobawä's group, on the other hand, was at war with this village because members of his own group murdered a friendly Möwaraoba-teri visitor in 1940, touching off a series of raids between them. Anxious to develop an alliance, Kąobawä's group accepted a feast invitation from the Iwahikoroba-teri and visited that village to participate in the feast. Up to that point they were only on trading terms with them.

The Iwahikoroba-teri, however, had made a prior arrangement with their friends, the Möwaraoba-teri, to help them massacre Kąobawä's men and abduct his group's women. The Möwaraoba-teri were hidden in the jungle outside the village when Kąo-

[1] The competitive aspects of feasting in many primitive societies has been dealt with at length by Marcel Mauss, whose essay *The Gift* is now an anthropological classic.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

neutral. The treacherous feast for their Shamatari enemies proved to be unsuccessful: The intended victims had accepted the invitation, but were informed of the plot just before they arrived. One of the Reyaboböwei-teri who had close kinsmen among them had misgivings about the matter and warned them.

Late in the afternoon it was learned that the Mahekodo-teri were, in fact, in the vicinity of the village, allegedly on a "camping trip." Kąobawä, of course, suspected their story, but to demonstrate his friendship he invited them to be his guests at a feast. As he and his men had been away for nearly two weeks, there was an abundance of food in their gardens and they could easily afford to entertain the Mahekodo-teri and their traveling companions, the Boreta-teri. Together, the guests numbered about 100—after they fetched their women and children.

This sets the stage for the feast in the kind of context that makes it more intelligible: The specific historical relationships between the participants and the nature of their mutual mistrust. Now I will give the details of the events that followed.

The Feast

Perhaps because he suspected the Mahekodo-teri and Boreta-teri of intimidation, Kąobawä also invited the Karohi-teri to attend the feast. They are a small but dependable ally and had themselves separated from the Mahekodo-teri many years ago. This established a balance of power at the projected feast should any trouble arise, for the combination of both Boreta-teri and Mahekodo-teri was of sufficient strength to worry any host. With the aid of the Karohi-teri, Kąobawä's group was more of a match for the visitors.

The feast started out on a sour note. It is the custom of the Yąnomamö visitors to arrive only after an invitation from their hosts, sent by messenger on the day of the feast. The Mahekodo-teri and Boreta-teri, however, arrogantly arrived nearly a week before Kąobawä's group was prepared to receive them and set up a large, temporary camp a short distance from the village. They were guests and could legitimately demand to be fed. Because of this, Kąobawä and his covillagers were under obligation to feed them, some hundred or so people, and took them to the gardens to supply them with enough plantains to last a week. Kąobawä was a little disturbed that they would be so impolite as to arrive uninvited, but took the situation quite philosophically. After all, they had fed his group for the better part of a year.

He and several other men cut a large quantity of plantains, which were hung in his house and allowed to ripen for a week, to be boiled into *dare*, a thick, sweet soup, on the day of the feast. That afternoon Kąobawä and a few of the older men commissioned a hunting party comprised of young men, several of whom were Kąobawä's brothers, whose responsibility would be to obtain a large quantity of fresh meat to give to the visitors on the day after the feast. Most of them were reluctant to go, as their feet were still sore from the trip to the Shamatari village. A few of them claimed to be sick and managed to escape recruitment into the hunting party in this way. This hunt, with the hanging of the plantains in the headman's house, initiated the feast. The excitement that usually attends a feast began at this time.

That evening the young men danced and sang in the village, an institution called *[illegible]*, thereby insuring themselves with luck on the hunt. (The Yąnomamö also

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 107]

amoamo on other occasions, but invariably do so on the day the plantains are hung in the village in anticipation of a feast.) Every evening the men are away on their *henomou*, the week-long hunt, the young women and girls sing and dance in the village to insure them success.

The hunters left at dawn the following morning, carrying a large supply of roasted and green plantains with them to eat while they hunted. They had picked a site some 25 miles up the Mavaca River for their hunt, as game was known to abound there. Their task was to obtain monkeys, armadillos, wild turkeys, wild pig, tapir or sloth, the only meat deemed worthy to give to guests. They would not be permitted to eat any of this game, but could consume any other game they captured, such as deer, small birds, a small species of wild turkey, or insects and fish they happened to come upon. The feast meat, however, was earmarked for the guests and could not be eaten by the hunters. On this particular hunting trip the men miscalculated the amount of food they would need to sustain them during the hunt, and one of them returned after four days to fetch more plantains. He also gave Kąobawä a report on the hunt's success, creating a small sensation in the village: They had already killed a large number of *huibo*, a particularly large and very desirable monkey. They had also come upon a quantity of turtle eggs at a sand bar and were eating as many as they could. When they returned later, they cached the remaining eggs in my house, so as not to have to share them with the visitors.

Meanwhile, the visitors were making gluttons of themselves, and the hosts started to grumble about the large number of plantains they had already eaten. The week's supply they originally provided had been consumed in half that time, and the guests had been given permission a second time to harvest more from their hosts' gardens. This was no way for guests to behave, and it soon became apparent that they were intimidating Kąobawä's group. Still, he and his followers continued to supply them with all the food they needed, keeping their complaints to themselves. They did not want it to be known that they were worried about running short of food. Instead, they planned to conduct the feast on a scale that would be difficult to reciprocate.

The hunters returned and presented their catch to Kąobawä. It was brought to his house and placed on the ground, wrapped up in leaves. Kąobawä ignored it for a while and then slowly began to unpack it (see Fig. 4–1) while everybody watched—especially the hunters, who were quite proud of the quantity of meat they had obtained: seventeen *huibo* monkeys, seven wild turkeys, and three large armadillos. Hunting trips are not usually this successful, but the hunters had fortunately stumbled into a large band of *huibo* and had nearly wiped it out.

Kąobawä and his group were anxious to conduct the feast for their visitors and present them with the food, because by so doing the visitors would be obliged to leave for home, thereby ending the drain on the gardens.[2]

The feast was scheduled for the day following the return of the hunters, even though the Karohi-teri had not yet arrived. Kąobawä and his group were so anxious to rid themselves of their ravenous guests by this time that they decided to hold a separate feast for the Karohi-teri on the day following the departure of the Mahekodo-teri. This would involve a considerable amount of extra work, but they were more than willing to

[2] I have seen several instances of Yąnomamö groups getting rid of visitors who have joined them semipermanently by holding a feast in their honor; when the ceremonial food is presented, the visitors are obliged to leave.

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The members of Lower Bisaasi-teri had joined Kąobawä's group for the feast, as they, too, were on friendly terms with the Mahekodo-teri and had benefited from the latter's hospitality after the treacherous feast in 1950. Before Kąobawä's group had separated from the Lower Bisaasi-teri, there had been one headman over the entire composite village. This was a brother to Kąobawä's father; when the groups split, the older man led the faction of Lower Bisaasi-teri, leaving Kąobawä to lead the Upper group. On this particular day, when the two groups had temporarily coalesced for the feast, the older man was conceded the honor of chanting with the visitor's delegate, Asiawä, the son of the Mahekodo-teri headman.

Ten minutes after the old visitor entered the village, Asiawä entered the clearing, touching off an explosion of wild cheering that marked the opening of the dance. He was spectacular in his bright new loin cloth, long red parrot feathers streaming from his armbands, and black monkey-tail headband covered with white buzzard down. He marched dramatically to the center of the village clearing, while all of Kąobawä's followers cheered, and struck the visitor's pose: motionless, head upward, and weapons held vertically next to his face. He stood there two or three minutes so his hosts could admire him. This gesture signified that he had come in peace and was announcing his benevolent intentions by standing where all could see him. If they bore him malice, they had to shoot him then or not at all.[5] He then marched to Kąobawä's house and was met by Kąobawä's father's brother, the temporary leader of the combined host group, and the two men immediately began to chant. This was the formal acceptance of the feast invitation by Asiawä on behalf of his entire group. They chanted for five minutes or so, bouncing up and down from the knees, now face to face, now side to side, but always lively and loud. Suddenly, they stopped, and Asiawä squatted, his back to the sun, while the host's representative retired to his hammock. The cheering died down. Asiawä squatted for several minutes before one of Kąobawä's younger brothers brought a half-gourd full of plantain soup to him and set it on the ground. He ignored it politely for several minutes, staring into the distance, holding his weapons horizontally next to his mouth. Presently, he put his weapons down, picked up the container of soup, and drained it in one draft before setting it back down. As soon as he had set it down, one of Kąobawä's younger brothers brought him a large pack-basket filled with boiled green plantains and smoked armadillo meat. Asiawä stood while the strap of the basket was placed over his head and adjusted across his shoulders so as to not crumple his headdress. Trying to look dramatic, he staggered rapidly out of the village under his burden of food, while the hosts again cheered wildly. This food was eaten by the visitors while they finished their decorating, each receiving a small portion.

Within a half-hour of Asiawä's departure the visitors had completed their decorating and had assembled just outside the entrance to the village. The men, all finely decorated, stood at the front of the gathering, while the women, girls, and young boys, also decorated, but each carrying a load of family possessions, brought up the rear. At the signal of Asiawä's father, the first two dancers burst into the village, separated, and danced around the periphery of the clearing in opposite directions, while Kąobawä's group welcomed them enthusiastically with shouts and shrill screams. Two at a time,

[5] I have a number of informants' accounts of visitors being shot down while standing in the clearing to announce their visit. Whenever I accompanied visitors to strange villages for the first time I, too, was obliged to participate in this rite and always had an uneasy feeling about it.

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the visiting dancers entered, pranced around the village periphery, wildly showing off their decorations and weapons and then returning to the group. Each dancer had unique decorations and a unique dance step, something personal that he could exhibit. He would burst into the village screaming a memorized phrase, wheel and spin, stop in his tracks, dance in place, throw his weapons down, pick them up again, aim them at the line of hosts with a wild expression on his face, prance ahead a few steps, repeat his performance, and continue on around the village in this manner, while the hosts cheered wildly. When everyone had had an individual turn, the entire group entered, danced single file around the periphery several times, and gathered at the center of the clearing, where they formed a tightly knit group. They stood motionless, except for the heaving of their chests, holding their weapons vertically. After they had stood there a few moments—in a final display of decorations—Kąobawä's followers emerged from their houses and approached the center of the village, each man inviting one or more of the visitors to his house, leading him away from the village center by the arm. As each visitor was led away, his family, watching from the village entrance, unceremoniously joined him at the host's house, bringing the family possessions along. Within a few minutes the dance plaza was deserted and the visitors were resting comfortably in their hosts' hammocks. Even in the hammocks, the Yąnomamö visitors are able to put on a silent display of their finery as they lay with their legs crossed, one arm behind their head, staring at the ceiling, waiting for their hosts to feed them ripe plantain soup from the bark troughs—it is almost as if they are strutting from a reclining position.

After the guests had been given their first round of soup, the men of Kąobawä's village assembled outside the entrance and came in to dance around the village for their guests. They, too, had an opportunity to put on a display of their own decorations, after which they retired to entertain the guests.

There were three troughs full of soup in the village. The first one was emptied in the process of bringing numerous gourdsful to the some one hundred visitors (see Fig. 4–2). After they had consumed this, the guests then assembled at the second trough and began eating there. Before this trough was finished, they moved as a group to the third trough and repeated their ceremonial consumption, before returning to their hammocks to rest and regain their appetites. Approximately two hours had passed from the time the first dancers entered the village until the guests retired from the third trough of soup. They had not yet eaten all of the contents—all in all, some 95 gallons of it—but managed to do so by morning.[6]

Shortly after dark the marathon chanting (*waiyamou*) began—it continued until dawn. At dawn the visitors conducted their trade and were given the baskets of "going-home food": boiled green plantains with smoked meat. The women and children departed with the food, leaving the men behind to trade. The visitors made requests through their headman, and Kąobawä would produce the item by enjoining one of the local men to give it. The item would be thrown at the feet of the man who wanted it. He would ignore it for a while and then give it a cursory examination, throwing it back on the ground. His peers would then examine it in greater detail and extol its virtues, while the

[6]During some feasts, the ashes of the dead are mixed with the boiled, ripe plantain soup and eaten by friends and relatives of the deceased. The feast also serves as a preliminary to a raid that involves two or more villages. The sponsor of the raid will entertain his allies in a feast the day before the raiding party departs. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the raid.